

Work/Life Newsletter

Work/Life News

November 2001

Extra, Extra...



New on Our Web Site

Moving Tips: The Work/Life Team has just finalized our moving tips to help make your move go a little smoother and hopefully be less hectic for you and your family. In a past issue, we noted a few of them, but check out the complete list on our web site at <http://www.usbr.gov/waft>.



Accomplishment Report: Also new is the 1999-2000 Work/Life Team Accomplishment Report. Some of the Team's accomplishments were: 1) developing a quarterly Work/Life Newsletter; 2) enhancing the Work/Life web page to include wellness tips and links to other work/life related sites such as elder care; and 3) meeting with field staff in several regions to explain work/life programs, answer questions, and receive suggestions from employees. Click on *Reports and Activities* and read it in its entirety.

Coping and Managing Stress after a Disaster- if you click on *Other Sites*, you will see a waving flag that has links to some very informative topics dealing with "Coping with Emotions after a Disaster," "Managing Traumatic Stress," and "After a Disaster: Steps You Can Take to Cope with a Stressful Situation," just to name a few. We hope these sites will help you get through these difficult times our Nation is facing.

Welcome Aboard

Upper Colorado Region has a new alternate to the Work/Life Team. His name is Patricio "Pat" A. Martinez. Pat has 32

years of federal service, which consists of a stint in the Marine Corps, a short time with the Soil Conservation Service, and the remainder with the Bureau of Reclamation. Pat works in the Western Colorado Area Office in Grand Junction, Colorado, as a contract administrator. Welcome aboard, Pat!

DOI - Quality of Work/Life Programs

The National Business Center (NBC) at DOI in Washington, D.C. has assumed responsibility for the Quality of Work/Life Programs department-wide. Several team members will be meeting with NBC representatives to discuss Reclamation's initiatives and any ideas we have for the future.



Hot Topics

This issue we have focused on wellness and leave topics.



- Separate Room to Exercise:

The Team often gets questions on how to initiate an exercise room in your office. First, you need your supervisor's approval. Then you need to find funding for the cost of the room and exercise equipment. There is no specific funding for an exercise room, but by working with your supervisor, you may be able to find funds that can be used. It may help your proposal if you can show how many employees would use the room and how much the project will cost per employee.

- Wellness Incentive Program: Great idea for individual offices to offer some incentive programs for different wellness programs (weight loss, lowering cholesterol, etc.).

- Health Fitness Membership: Under the wellness program, Reclamation may reimburse you up to ½ the cost

of a health fitness membership or designate a maximum dollar amount per year to attend a gym of your choice. You need to check with your Human Resources Office to see what is being offered in your office.

- Leave Share Program: This program provides for transfer of donated annual leave to employees with medical emergencies or employees with family members with medical emergencies. Any employee may donate their annual leave to an employee who has been approved to participate in the leave share program.

- Leave Donations: There have been instances where annual leave was lost because an employee donated their annual leave in the last pay period of the leave year and the employee was not in a work status, but on leave during that last pay period. In order to avoid forfeiture, Human Resources recommends that leave donations of use or lose leave be made prior to the last pay period of the leave year, no later than December 28, 2001.

For example, you have use or lose annual leave and want to donate leave in pay period 02 (2002). Pay period 02 has one holiday (8 hours) which leaves 72 hours available to work which may be donated. If you have annual leave scheduled for 24 hours in that pay period, you can donate only 48 hours of leave.

Quarterly Meeting in Oklahoma City



The team's last quarterly meeting was held in July at the Great Plains Region Oklahoma City Field Office. The office was a gracious host and invited the team to meet with employees and managers. The team presented an overview of work/life programs followed by a Q&A session. The presentation was well received—many felt they had gained a better understanding of the Work/Life Team as well as the various programs in Reclamation.

Showing Your Patriotism



All across Reclamation, employees were showing their patriotism after the horrible attacks on September 11, 2001. Our hearts and prayers go out to everyone who was affected by this tragedy.

We wanted to share a few efforts that we were aware of in Reclamation of employees' showing their support during a time of need for our Country.

The Great Plains Regional Office and the Eastern Area Colorado Office in conjunction with the Work/Life Team representative and the Employees Association took orders for a 3' x 5' outdoor flag to be hung at the employees' homes to show their patriotism for the United States. Flags were hot items and could not be found, but with the help of Senator Burns' Office (Montana) in D.C., we ordered over 200 flags between both offices. Not only did we get them for a great price, they were excellent quality. The Regional Office charged \$10 each and donated \$2.50 from each flag to the Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund.

Also in the Great Plains Regional Office, the Employee Association took orders on a t-shirt that was being offered in Billings with the U.S. flag on it and the words "United We Stand" printed on the front. More than 150 shirts were sold with all profits going to the Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. Last count we heard, Billings had sold over 25,000 t-shirts (at \$10 per shirt, \$250,000 was donated to the relief fund) and they would continue to make them as long as people wanted to buy them.

In the Denver Office, employees created a large poster for the police, firefighters, rescue teams, support services, and the people of Washington D.C. and New York City. Employees, along with Secretary Gale Norton, signed it with their heartfelt messages to all that were affected by this tragedy.

The Phoenix Area Office employees donated materials and made red, white, and blue ribbons which were sold with proceeds going to the relief effort. They also had a taco lunch. Both these events raised \$354, which was donated to the Disaster Relief Fund.

Another great story (on a bigger scope than Reclamation) is that the Federal Employee Education &

Assistance Fund (FEEA) has provided over \$150,000 in grants to civilian federal employees and their families affected by the terrorist attacks. FEEA continues to help families affected by the Pentagon, World Trade Center, and Pennsylvania tragedies by providing financial assistance for travel expenses for victims' relatives, funeral costs, and other immediate financial needs.

FEEA has announced that it will ensure that the minor children of civilian federal employees killed or permanently injured in the attack will be financially able to attend college. Families may register children for the program by calling FEEA toll-free at 1-800-323-4140.

FEEA Lends a Helping Hand to Families in Need



When an emergency occurs that causes an employee to fall behind in their basic living needs, no interest grants and loans are available.

Currently, there is a \$700 limit on loans and repayment is by allotment.

Financial assistance may be provided for the following unseen emergencies such as death in the family, loss of income, critical illness in the employees immediate family, major loss of property, and medical emergencies.

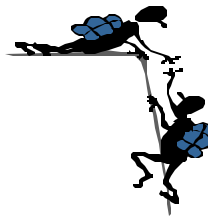
Short-term assistance may be provided when a government pay error occurs. FEEA may provide assistance up to the amount of the pay shortage for one pay period (not to exceed \$700) under the condition that the loan is repaid in full once the error has been corrected.

For questions or an application, please call 1-800-323-4140 or access FEEA's website at www.feea.org.

Employee Assistance Program

As a result of the tragedies that took place in September, the current threat of anthrax, and concern about other acts of terrorism, we are all experiencing a

range of emotions, often difficult to express. Each Reclamation employee and their immediate family members have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counselors who can help with emotional and stress-related issues. The counselors also provide assistance with financial, job, and family issues. The EAP services are completely confidential and are staffed with professional counselors.



As Secretary Norton said, our primary concern is the health and safety of our employees. You are encouraged to use the EAP services available for help in coping with the recent tragedies as well as the stress of everyday life.

Remember, you need to care for yourself, in order to care for your family, friends, and coworkers.

Below is the number for your EAP in your region/office:

GP Region: 1-800-523-5668
 LC Region: 1-800-222-0364
 MP Region: 1-800-937-7770
 PN Region: 1-800-523-5668
 UC Region: 1-800-523-5668
 Denver: 1-800-433-2320
 Wash. D.C.: 1-800-222-0364

The Bottom Line



This is from an article in the PERC Reports as taken from Environmental Network News.

AT&T recently earned the Vision of America Award for 2001. The annual award is presented by Keep America Beautiful, a non-profit organization with 500 chapters that educates people about reducing waste. The article states:

"AT&T has created and actively promoted a "telework" program that allows employees to work from home using their computers. The company estimates that its telecommuters have avoided driving 110 million miles, saved 5.1 million gallons of gasoline and kept 50,000 tons of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

In addition to these environmental benefits, the company has benefitted, too. AT&T credits its telecommuters with \$100 million in increased annual productivity and savings of \$25 million a year related to reduced office space."

Wellness Tip

Survey: Workers Want Balanced Lives - A study finds that balancing the needs of work and their personal lives has emerged as a top career concern of American workers.



Creating a balance between one's work and personal life has emerged as the top-ranked career driver among U.S. workers, according to a study by B.T. Novations, a consulting unit of Provant.

Many companies have gone along with the trend, but the situation may change due to the economic downturn. "By a two-to-one margin, over such goals as rapid advancement or cutting-edge challenges, Americans want greater balance," said Kurt Sandholtz, vice president of B.T. Novations, which carried out the year-long survey in 2000 of about 6,000 workers.

"But with a faltering economy," he added, "workers may find balance more elusive than ever."

"More and more employees feel they're working longer hours without enough leisure time. With the relative prosperity of the past five years, employers were forced to address this frustration as recruiting and retention became major concerns. So we saw more companies allow employees increased flexibility and even encourage them to pursue personal interests."

Recession fears post a dilemma for senior management, according to Sandholtz.

"In addition to downsizing, we see evidence of tightening in the workplace. Once again people are being asked to do more with less ... to do whatever it takes to help their employers meet earnings targets. And their typical response is to hunker down, work even harder and try to keep their job."

In tight times, Sandholtz said, many companies actually encourage workaholic behavior. "But wiser employers realize that such an attitude promotes employee burnout, to say nothing of crushing innovation and creativity. And fostering a bunker mentality can have a harmful impact on an organization long after the economic slowdown has run its course."

He said management could continue to acknowledge employees' needs for work/life balance without jeopardizing financial performance and offered the following advice:

Manage results, not activities. People may find creative ways to meet targets if they're given sufficient flexibility in how they get the job done.

Don't pretend work/life balance issues will go away if you ignore them. Address them.

Employees respond to leaders who share their own struggles and communicate a sense that "We're in this together."

Offer time off as a reward. When members of a project team outdo themselves to meet a deadline, reward them with a day or two off. This would give employees a chance to catch up on personal matters that they may have sacrificed while working overtime.

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